

that we know the rites of these deities better than the men who practised, or at least who witnessed them. To accept the latter would involve a wrenching, clipping, mangling, and distorting of myth and ritual from which even Macrobius shrank.¹ On the other hand, the view that the essence of all these rites was the mimic death and revival of vegetation, explains them separately and collectively in an easy and natural way, and harmonizes with the general testimony borne by the ancients to their substantial similarity.

¹ Osiris, Attis, Adonis, and Dionysus however, he interpreted as the moon, were all resolved by him into the sun ; See the *Saturnalia* ^ bk. i. but he spared Demeter (Ceres), whom.